

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 FREETO 00706 011445Z

ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7220

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 0706

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PPDC, OVIP, PEPR, SL, US

SUBJ: PRESIDENT STEVENS INVITES THE PRESIDENT TO VISIT SIERRA
LEONE

1. PRESIDENT STEVENS CALLED ME IN THIS MORNING, MARCH 1,
AND SAID THAT HE HAD LEARNED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD BE
VISITING LIBERIA AS WELL AS NIGERIA ON HIS TRIP THE END OF
MARCH. THE PRESIDENT TOLD ME HE WISHED TO INVITE PRESIDENT
CARTER TO VISIT SIERRA LEONE DURING HIS TRAVELS. HE ADDED
THAT HE WOULD LIKE ME TO INFORM THE PRESIDENT THAT PRESIDENT
STEVENS SUGGESTS THAT THE PRESIDENT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GEOGRAPHY.
SINCE HE WOULD BE IN LIBERIA, SIERRA LEONE'S NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR,
HE SHOULD USE THE SITUATION TO VISIT FREETOWN. HE ADDED
THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE MOST WARMLY WELCOMED.

2. I SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO VISIT
ONLY NIGERIA IN AFRICA AND THAT I PRESUMED HIS STOP IN MONROVIA
WAS A REFLECTION OF THE HISTORIC TIES BETWEEN LIBERIA AND
UNITED STATES. I ADDED THAT, AS HE WELL KNEW, THE PRESIDENT
WAS VERY TIGHTLY SCHEDULED AND THAT I DOUBTED IT WOULD BE
POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME TO MAKE ALTERATIONS IN HIS TRAVEL PLANS.
I SAID I WOULD, OF COURSE, PASS ON HIS INVITATION TO WASHINGTON.

3. COMMENT: WHILE I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD
RECEIVE A WARM AND MOST ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME IN SIERRA LEONE
FROM PRESIDENT STEVENS AND FROM THE PEOPLE, I HESITATE TO
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RECOMMEND SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE INVITATION GIVEN SIERRA
LEONE'S LESS THAN PERFECT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. I BELIEVE
IT WOULD BE QUITE ADEQUATE FOR ME TO DELIVER A POLITE AND RE-
GRETFUL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT DECLINING THE INVITATION.
LINEHAN

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